United Nations A/AC.154/395

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 May 2010

Original: English

Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 25 May 2010 from the Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

I have the honour to enclose a copy of a note verbale dated 24 May 2010 (see annex) that has been sent by the United States Mission to the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations as a response to its notes of 15 March 2010 and of 7 May 2010 (see A/AC.154/393, annex) regarding delays in visa issuance and denial of a visa for the Deputy Foreign Minister, Mohammad Mehdi Akhonzadeh Basti.

I request that you circulate the attached diplomatic note as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) Russell F. **Graham**
Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs

10-38055 (E) 010610

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Annex to the letter dated 25 May 2010 from the Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations and wishes to refer to the latter's notes verbale of 15 March 2010 and 7 May 2010, respectively, regarding delays and the denial of a visa to Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Mehdi Akhonzadeh Basti.

As the Permanent Mission is aware, the United States takes its responsibilities as host country to the United Nations very seriously and is mindful of the provisions of the United Nations/United States Headquarters Agreement. Each year, the host country receives thousands of applications for official visas from individuals seeking entry into the United States in order to access the United Nations Headquarters district. The policy of the United States is to issue visas without charge and promptly. Consistent with a long-standing understanding with the United Nations, the United States reviews visa applications for potential national security concerns. Depending on the individual case, this review can take time.

With specific reference to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that began on Monday, 3 May 2010, the host country received numerous visa applications from representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The vast majority of these applications were received on 27, 28 and 29 April — less than a week before the conference began and leaving only one to three working days to process the applications. Eighty applications were approved and the visas issued, but the application of the Deputy Foreign Minister was denied. In accordance with the long-standing operational procedure in place with the United Nations, this visa denial was reported to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs on the same day the decision was made at the highest level of the Department of State. In the view of the United States, the right of the Islamic Republic to be duly represented at the Review Conference was not undermined. Indeed, the conference was attended by both the Head of Government and the Foreign Minister.

The United States Mission to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.